

looked at and understood, and the air was filled with anecdotes so told as to illustrate the belief. These stories and these experiences were Bunyan's early mental food. One of them, which had deeply impressed the imagination of the Midland counties, was the story of "Old Tod." This man came one day into court, in the Summer Assizes at Bedford, "all in a dung sweat," to demand justice upon himself as a felon. No one had accused him, but God's judgment was not to be escaped, and he was forced to accuse himself. "My Lord," said Old Tod to the judge, "I have been a thief from my childhood. I have been a thief ever since. There has not been a robbery committed these many years, within so many miles of this town, but I have been privy to it." The judge, after a conference, agreed to indict him of certain felonies which he had acknowledged. He pleaded guilty, implicating his wife along with him, and they were both hanged.

An intense belief in the moral government of the world creates what it insists upon. Horror at sin forces the sinner to confess it, and makes others eager to punish it. "God's revenge against murder and adultery" becomes thus an actual fact, and justifies the conviction in which it rises. Bunyan was specially attentive to accounts of judgments upon swearing, to which he was himself addicted. He tells a story of a man at Wimbledon, who, after uttering some strange blasphemy, was struck with sickness, and died cursing. Another such scene he probably witnessed himself,<sup>1</sup> and never forgot. An alehouse-keeper in the neighbourhood of Elstow had a son who was half-witted. The favourite amusement, when a party was collected drink-

<sup>1</sup> The story is told by Mr. Attentive in the *Life of Mr. Badman*; but it is almost certain that Bunyan was relating his own experience.